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THE TABLET.

No. LXXXVIII.

"The most effectual way to promote the good of the people, is to prevail on them to perform their duty."

EVERY person who takes a serious review of the incidents with which he has been affected will confess, that he has suffered more evil from pretended friends, than from open enemies. Nor is it difficult to assign a reason, why this should be the case.—We guard ourselves, at all points, against those we suspect to be our adversaries; while we heedlessly expose our opinions, our character and our property to those who make professions of friendship. No circumstance more strongly marks a want of firmness in a real friend, or a want of sincerity in a supposed one, than his complimenting our vices, or encouraging our errors.

If individuals suffer severely from the fickleness or insincerity of those who pass for friends, how much more liable is the community to be imposed on, by those who assume the name of patriots? Artful politicians accomplish their views by the warm wishes and patriotic concern they express for the public good. There is a much easier way to gain public favor than by deserving it. The most slender talents are sufficient to please and seduce the people, but it requires real abilities and fortitude to promote their best interest. Nothing can be more evident than that those who clamor the most, about the public good, promote it the least. The rant and declamation of certain blusters who live among the ignorant parts of the community beguile the people into false notions of government, and keep them vexatious and discontented. There are always some current prejudices of which designing men may avail themselves, and which in some instances may recommend them more effectually to the populace, than an honest independent line of conduct. The actions of such men however deserve any other appellation more than that of patriotism. No man should be deemed a patriot who has not given other specimens of public spirit, than fair speeches and pompous professions. The people will seldom do wrong, if influential characters will endeavor to convince them what is right. But when those who should instruct the ignorant, and admonish the vicious, act so perversely, as to flatter the one, and mislead the other, how can it be expected that the public opinion will be a safe guide to direct public measures? While there are so many men whose importance in society depends on cherishing errors in the public mind, how difficult is it to produce a perfect union of sentiment in favor of a just and honorable system of politics! The people, when they are honestly informed and fairly advised, will acquiesce in whatever will promote the public prosperity. It requires some art and address to beguile mankind into a belief, that confusion is better than order; that injustice is preferable to honesty. There cannot be a more plausible cover for bad intentions, than a pretence that they correspond with the public opinion. Such a pretext is the more convenient as it cannot easily be detected. In many interesting questions the public opinion is a very indefinite thing. It is often appealed to respecting objects which it has never contemplated. A sentiment prevailing among a few men, should not be called a public sentiment.

FROM THE INDEPENDENT CHRONICLE.

MR. ADAMS,

HOW far the spirit of the citizens of New-Hampshire is changed since the adoption of the Federal Constitution, I cannot pretend to say—but the assertion of the President of that State, that their government "has ceased to be a free, sovereign, and independent State" is so alarming, that it ought to put the citizens of every State in the Union, upon the most serious reflection. If that State has surrendered its sovereignty and independence, it follows that every State has done the same; and provided this is the case, to what a deplorable situation have we reduced ourselves, by the adoption of the Federal Constitution.—No man, however, has before been hardy enough to come forward with so flagrant an assertion; the most violent partisans have been cautious how far they ventured on this ground, knowing that it was too early a period to broach such treasonable sentiments. By this declaration the alarm has gone forth, and it has now become the duty of the several States, in their legislative capacities, to remonstrate against such a bold attack

upon their freedom, sovereignty, and independence—and tho' the State of New-Hampshire should suffer their President to proceed in his career with impunity, yet it is not doubted, but those States which still mean to support their freedom, sovereignty and independence, will bear public testimony against the declaration, and early check the wicked designs of men, however elevated their station.

BRUTUS.

THE OBSERVER.—No. XVII.

The re-establishment of public credit, a measure of sound policy.

IN my last number I considered the re-establishment of public credit, as a measure of justice to the national and state creditors. It may also be inquired, is it a measure of policy? An advantage to the creditors is apparent; but will this advantage be equal to the injury which must happen to the people at large by such an attempt? If the measure will be mutually advantageous, all ground for questioning is gone; and having no alternative, we must proceed in the most wise and economical manner to provide funds: But if it will be destructive to the people, if justice and policy are opposed, the question yet remains to be new traced, and solved on political grounds.

There is an old adage, "honesty is the best policy," to which I have not known an exception. The wisdom which instituted the connections, dependencies and wants of society, doth not commonly, if ever, suffer an opposition between the moral duty and worldly good, either of individuals or communities. But as the question in consideration is too consequential to be risked on a maxim, more frequently spoken than felt, we must call up probable consequences to determine it.

In measures of policy, we find men have varying opinions: This chiefly arises from different degrees of information, and from a limitation of the questions, on which a judgment is formed. Those who espouse various opinions, before they become warm in debate, ought mutually to communicate every information, and examine the whole extent and all the consequences of the question to be decided.

Is it good policy, or for the benefit of the people at large to restore American credit? Two persons of the same honesty, may give a different answer to this question, from the different limitations which they affix to it in their own minds. One considers its present operation, without regard to distant and national consequences, his education and connections in business do not enable him to comprehend these, without very particular information; he appeals to the present moment only, and thinks it is better for himself and for a majority of his neighbors, not to pay, than it is to pay taxes; he knows not the purposes for which public credit are necessary, nor the great benefits which will accrue by its restoration, to agriculture, commerce, and manufactures; he sees no present danger from foreign enemies, and thinks not best to restore it. Another person is acquainted with these subjects, and knows that by avoiding a present small evil, we risk the danger of a thousand which are greater, and perhaps also our very national existence.

The consequences of a depreciated credit have been too recently felt, to need a very particular description. War is a complication of calamities to the best appointed nation: To one destitute of finance and credit, it is almost certain ruin. Your late war began in a sacred enthusiasm, breathed forth from heaven on the great body of the people, which supplied a thousand wants, and gave a circulation to a paper without foundation. As this enthusiasm abated the public distress began; and half the mischief we endured, arose more from want of credit, than from the policy or power of Great Britain. A nation who can pay only in promises, which are but half believed, loses a power over its own internal resources.

Was it not a want of credit which often nearly disbanded your army? Was it not this which obliged you to execute every measure in the most expensive manner? When you had brought into the field, a military force, of one third of the appointed complement. Was it not a want of credit which obliged you to create a more numerous and more devouring host of purchasers, and retainers on the public supplies, and even to convert your town officers into gentlemen of the public departments? Why was your army but half filled, which caused a protraction of the war? Not from a want of brave and hardy men; but by a want of credit. Hence arose the necessity of those vexatious calls on the militia, at a season of the year most ruinous to the farmer, and which was a greater drawback on his interest, than all the taxes he was called to pay. It is true these things are passed, and we hope never to see another war; the wish is pious and pacific, but wishing is not fighting; and will never defend our country. The principles of ambition and violence still exist in the world, and the nations have not yet beat their swords into ploughshares; little crossings of interest, may be strangely aggravated into bloody contention. The way to prevent war is a constant preparation to repel; so good a country as this without credit and a system of defence, is a strong temptation to the avarice and ambition of the world.

Should the United States by any unforeseen event be drawn into war, how, without an established credit are they to make defence? The richest nation in Europe cannot support war without having recourse to credit, and much less can these States do it. Past events will not be soon forgot; and if your promises are not fulfilled in some reasonable way, where are the men who will again loan their property to the public? Where is the farmer or manufacturer who will sell you his provision or clothing; or the soldier who will risk his life for paper, when they know it is the custom of the people, after danger is past, to forget their engagements? Had another war overtaken these States before the organization of our present government, defence would have been impossible: with a treasury destitute of money and credit, we could not have enlisted, clothed and fed five thousand troops. Many private citizens were more capable of levying successful war, than the whole Union: a nest of pirates might have destroyed our whole trade, and laid many of our sea ports under contribution, and there was no public capacity to repel them. Our present government begins to be revered abroad; but deny them the means of establishing credit, and we sink back to ignominy, and a state of danger.

Suffer me next, to recal your attention from the danger of a foreign war, without credit to support it; to consider the evils which may arise within ourselves from the same cause. A people destitute of credit, are in imminent and constant danger of being enslaved by such bold usurpers as may wish to wrest from them their properties. By a late insurrection, New-England was actually threatened, and I pray that the other States may notice the warning. The Massachusetts was the seat of insurgency, the same spirit wrought in the neighboring States, and all wise men considered it as a common evil. The insurgents had doubtless some

real grievances, which might have been redressed by a proper application; but instead of this they put themselves under the guidance of mad, base, and weak leaders. While we pitied the people, we were obliged to condemn their cause. The serious consequences and ending of this affair are well known. Had that insurrection been headed by a man of ambition, intrigue, extensive popularity and wealth, it would probably have overturned the government of New-England, and laid a foundation for some kind of dominion most dangerous for our liberties.

Were it either prudent or necessary, I could name you many great characters in America, who, if virtue had not prevented, might have legalized themselves and families, and formed a civil constitution in violence, suited to their own interests, and to their adherents in success. The very same people who are jealous for their privileges, in the hour of consideration, at a time of madness and insurrection will give them all away; and in this very manner many free nations have lost their liberty. Had such a thing been attempted by one, or by a coalition of a few great and popular characters; neither Congress, nor the State assemblies, who were wholly destitute of credit, could have repelled them. It ought to be a first maxim of policy with a free republic, to preserve an unspotted faith, by which they may command their own resources, either against foreign invasion or domestic insurrection, and purchase foreign assistance.

The terrors of a despotic Prince, and the influence of a nobility devoted to his will, may with little credit, draw out the resources of his kingdom; but I trust the American republic will never have such terrors or nobility; she must depend on the virtue and information of her citizens, and the purity of her national character. Patriotism is a sacred name! And I believe there is more of it in this, than any other country, and the way to preserve it is to uphold national credit. Patriotism doth not consist in a few men giving their all for public purposes in the hour of danger, and without an expectation of being reimbursed; if it did, wait to the time of trial, and an experiment will prove that we have few patriots. To be willing to contribute a just proportion, and pay an equal share in the public expences—to be honest, and assist our government in being honest, is to be a Patriot.

A fixed credit is the only means for economy in national expences, which is another reason for its re-establishment.

Certain expences, and to a large amount, are unavoidable in every nation; and these will be doubled on the people, as they are obliged to make payment, by a lax and depreciated credit. I have inculcated in my former numbers, that high nominal taxation imposed on the principles of depreciation, is eventually paid by a great part of the people nearly equal to silver and gold. A suspicious credit always operates against the people; all bargaining for the public is on disadvantageous terms; the man who deals with them considers a risk, and acts from the same motive as he makes hazard in a lottery; a derangement runs thro' all public officers; it prevents responsibility and punctuality in all national concerns; and when an honest man has the care of the peoples' interests, he expects to manage them with loss; and an idea is gradually spread in the minds of men, that there is no evil in robbing the public.

Foreign nations, and merchants are eagle-eyed to discern the debilitated power of the country, and are not afraid to offend its majesty by abusing its subjects—commerce languishes, produce is low, and the farmer eventually pays the bill of national loss.

If the national debt be neglected, still there must be provision made for certain expences; an enfeebled credit will greatly increase these, and I believe to as great a sum, as would be necessary to fund the debt honorably, and support all other expences on the principles of a punctual regard to public faith.

A man who is slack, and has obtained a reputation of being worse than his promise, lives poor at great expence; it is the same with a nation, only in a greater degree. The false man may be compelled by law, but the slack nation cannot; these things are considered by those who deal with them, and they are treated in character.

Tho' my paper be already too long, there is one among many other considerations, which I cannot omit mentioning.

A violation of national promises, or tardiness in fulfilling them, hath a destructive influence on the morality of the people.

When the legislature of a nation sport with their engagements, every lesser corporation catches the same spirit and practice. The private citizen argues in self-justification, if our lawgivers violate the promises of a nation; if the greatest and most informed men will defraud for the public, because they have power; I may do the same with impunity when an occasion presents. A depreciated public credit in its various operations, for a series of years, hath done more to disseminate these dangerous sentiments, than all the institutions of science and religion have done to retard them.

Let government beware of that corruption in principle and manners, which by increasing, will prove its ruin.

FROM THE MASSACHUSETTS CENTINEL.

AGRICULTURAL.

THE government of the United States, may justly be denominated the "Landholder's Government," as at its head presides one of the most distinguished Landholders and Cultivators in the United States—who knows the advantages resulting from the promotion and encouragement of Agriculture—and who is well aware of the burdens under which it hath lain, from the absurd and erroneous systems of taxation adopted in the several States. The Farmers, therefore, are satisfied, that they shall yet see good days, and while the Farmer of Mount-Vernon, and the many respectable Husbandmen now in the Legislature of the Union, are their rulers, that the dry taxes, under which they have laboured so long, will shortly be no more—but that every encouragement wisdom can suggest, will be given to those, who by cultivating the earth, add most essentially to the benefit and prosperity of our Republic. Under this, then, their government, security shall reside under their vines—and feeling the benefit of a liberal system of laws, learning, science, and the arts that adorn life, shall rise up spontaneous in regions as yet untrod by the traveller, unsung by the poet—and unmeasured by the chain of the geometrician.—The reign of religion unfettered by superstition, and uncontrolled by arbitrary establishments, shall meliorate our condition as men.